

October 10, 2001

To: Washington State Board of Health Members
From: Craig McLaughlin, Policy Manager
Re: WARREN FEATHERSTONE REID AWARD

Summary

The Legislature created the Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care in 1994. It is intended to honor providers and facilities that improve access by providing high-quality, cost-effective service. At the May 9, 2001 Board meeting, Executive Director Don Sloma requested a sense of the Board and of Secretary Mary Selecky about whether to formalize the Board's role in the nominating process for the Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care. Mr. Sloma noted that the secretary is empowered by statute to convene "an advisory committee to assist in the selection of nominees," and that the secretary has relied on the Board to perform that function in the past. Ms. Selecky indicated her interest in formalizing the Board's role in the nominating process and Board Chair Linda Lake directed staff to present a plan. This memorandum and the attached materials are staff's response to that directive.

I reviewed the statute creating the award in 1994, the accompanying finding, and the nomination materials used by an internal DOH advisory committee in 1998. I also reviewed the timing and mechanism for awarding three other health care awards in this state. Finally, I drafted a letter from the chair seeking nominations and a nomination form, both of which are attached. I am proposing a nomination deadline of December 31. I am also proposing the establishment of a six-member nominating committee that would review the nominations during January and present a finalist or finalists to the Board during the February meeting (or the first possible meeting if the February meeting is canceled). This would allow the Board to provide direction to the Secretary and the Governor in time for them to make an announcement during the legislative session should the Governor choose to do so. The committee would include a board member, a staff member, a practitioner, a facility manager and representatives from DOH and the Health Care Authority. Language for a possible Board motion adopting the proposed plan appears at the end of this memo.

Background

Warren Featherstone Reid—"Feather"—retired from government service in 1993 after 48 years of policy work at the state and national levels. When he retired he was Governor Booth Gardner's health policy advisor. From 1993 to 1998 he served as Board Chair.

In 1994, the Legislature established the Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care. RCW 43.70.045 and 43.70.047, as well as the accompanying finding, provide considerable guidance about the nature of the award.

- It is created "to honor and recognize cost-effective and quality health care services." (RCW 43.70.045)
- Recipients shall be identified by the Governor "in conjunction with the secretary of health." (RCW 43.70.047)
- Possible recipients are "health care providers and facilities in Washington state." (RCW 43.70.047)
- Awardees will have exhibited "exceptional quality and value in the delivery of health care services." (RCW 43.70.047)
- The award will be presented annually, provided there are qualified nominees. (RCW 43.70.047)
- The emphasis on cost-effectiveness and value is linked to the Legislature's interest in "ensuring that all Washington residents have access to quality and affordable health care." (Finding—1994 c 7)
- Excellence relates to excellence in "quality management practices, value, and consumer satisfaction." (Finding—1994 c 7)
- The award is intended to highlight "centers of quality" and encourage their emulation. (Finding—1994 c 7)

The "Feather" was last awarded in 2001 to Sue Crystal, Administrator of the Health Care Authority. Another recipients is Board Member Ed Gray.

For this assignment I reviewed the application materials used by the Department of Health in 1998. The letter soliciting nominations went out June 10 under the signature of an assistant secretary. The application deadline was August 8. The application form was very detailed about the criteria.

I also reviewed materials for three other statewide awards: Heroes of Health Care, Washington Health Foundation; Award for Excellence in Public Health, WSALPHO; the Washington Oral Health Coalition Annual Awards. In all three cases, the award criteria were stated more broadly than the 1998 Feather criteria.

I was concerned that we not stack the awards and create an “awards season.” Below is a list of award deadlines.

	Heroes	WSALPHO	Feather 1998	WSOHC	Proposed
Call goes out	Spring	May 9	June 10	July 31	October 1
Deadline	March 9	July 1	August 8	August 20	December 31
Finalist					February 13
Awarded	April 26			September 7	

A call for nominations at the start of October would allow us to distribute materials at the Joint Conference in October. It would not conflict with existing award programs, and it would allow us to launch the formal process this year (only a couple weeks late) and maintain consistency in future years. It would present the Governor and the Secretary with options in time to make an announcement during legislative session, which seems advisable since this award was created by the Legislature.

Board staff would create a promotion plan to announce the opening of nominations. That plan would utilize Board mailing lists, the Board’s e-mail distribution lists, departmental mailing lists, listservs serving health professionals, conferences, press releases, and professional and industry association newsletters.

The award process presents an opportunity to include and involve other parties, and a thorough and fair review of the nominations requires technical and practical expertise in promoting value, access, and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of health-care services. I therefore recommend that the review of nominations include experts from other agencies and practitioners in the field. Specifically, I suggest a six-member committee:

1. A member of the Board appointed by the Chair
2. The Executive Director of the Board or a designee
3. A staff member from the Department of Health with relevant expertise selected by the Secretary.
4. A staff member from the Health Care Authority with relevant expertise selected by the Administrator.
5. A health care practitioner recruited by Board staff (possibly in consultation with appropriate professional associations such as the Washington State Medical Association).
6. An administrator of health care facility recruited by Board staff (possibly in consultation with appropriate trade associations such as the Washington State Hospital Association).

Recommended Board Motion

The Board may wish to consider, amend, and approve the following motion:

The State Board of Health shall assist the secretary health in the selection of nominees for the Warren Featherstone Reid Award for Excellence in Health Care. The Chair, with the assistance of Board staff, will issue a call for nominations on or about October 1 of each year. Nominations will be due by December 31. During January, a committee will review the nominations and recommend a finalist or list of finalists to the full Board. The committee shall comprise (1) one member of the Board appointed by the Chair; (2) the Executive Director of the Board or a designee; (3) one staff person from the Department of Health selected by the Secretary; (4) one staff person from the Health Care Authority selected by the Administrator; (5) one health care provider recruited by Board staff; and (6) one administrator from a health care facility recruited by Board staff. The Board will consider the committee's recommendations during the first meeting held after February 1 and communicate its findings to the secretary immediately thereafter.